

VIII.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

Pennant's Parrakeets.

SIR,—Last year I sent you an account of some Pennant's Parrakeets, bred at liberty, which left the nest in adult plumage. During the winter the female parent was accidentally killed, and the old cock mated with one of his daughters. The pair nested this summer, and the young showed the same peculiarity as before.

27 Sept. 1915.

Warblington House,
Havant, Hants.

Yours truly,

TAVISTOCK.

 Distribution of the Crested Tit of Scotland.

SIR,—So far as my information leads me with regard to the Crested Tit stated to have nested in eastern Ross-shire, I corresponded direct with Alexander MacDonald of Bahngown, Ross-shire, quite 40 years ago. He had collected eggs of Crossbills and Siskins for Mr. Hancock of Newcastle, but not the eggs of the Crested Tit, which species he very distinctly informed me had never to his knowledge bred in Ross-shire, and he himself also assured me he had never met with the bird there. Mr. Lewis Dunbar, however, did obtain the clutch of eggs which was supplied by him to Mr. Gould, and for which that gentleman had offered a handsome reward—£5. It was Mr. Gould who would not credit the statement of Lewis Dunbar that Crested Tits bred in "Strathspey," or for that part of it, anywhere in Scotland! Lewis Dunbar was introduced to Mr. Gould by Mr. Snowie of Inverness in 1847.

In a note by Lewis Dunbar, in a copy of "The Fauna of the Moray Basin"—which belonged to him, but on his death passed into the hands of Mr. Gair of Thurso,—he clearly states:—"From 1817 to 1853 I was in business in Inverness, but visited Grantown during the summer." It was in 1818 he sent Mr. Gould the nest and eggs, and it was in Strathspey that he obtained them, as he himself assured me.

Mr. Ogilvie-Grant's record of the presence of Crested

Tits in eastern Ross-shire may, I think, safely be considered a very recent extension northward of the species. About the progress of its extension within the confines of Strathspey and tributaries of the River Spey, I had with considerable minuteness gathered all the data available many years ago, and had kept the subject up-to-date, to the issue of Buckley's and my 'Fauna of Moray.'

With reference to the entry in 'The Catalogue of the Collection of Birds' Eggs in the British Museum,' vol. iv. p. 304—"4. Ross-shire (*J. Hancock: Tristram Coll., Crowley Bequest*)"—I cannot help thinking there is some mistake here as to locality. The two persons' names who were associated with collecting done for Hancock and John Wolley were Alexander MacDonald of Balnagown, E. Ross-shire, and Lewis Dunbar. Most of the collecting by the latter at that period was confined to the Spey Valley and to taking eggs of Osprey, Kite, &c., and in response to Mr. Gould's offer of £5—a nest of four eggs of the Crested Tit. Hancock and Lewis Dunbar were together at an Osprey site at Glenmore, and it is possible, *indeed likely*, that on that occasion a Crested Tit's nest may have been found. I myself have found the nest of the species quite near to the said Osprey site!

Now that Mr. Ogilvie-Grant has recorded the appearance of the species in eastern Ross-shire, it may reasonably be expected that such an extension of range in autumn may, later on, result in true extension of nesting range; and the perfectly suitable woods and plantations of eastern Ross-shire and old-time haunts of the Crossbill and Siskin may come to be occupied by a species, whose past extensions have been fairly accurately traced from a comparatively small area in Speyside to cover many miles in length and breadth, and down the plateaus of Strathspey, even as far as Fochabers, and also over the valley's rims in several directions, and in the tributary valleys.

Dunipace, Stirlingshire,
Dec. 6, 1915.

Yours truly,
J. A. HARVIE-BROWN.

List of M.B.O.U. serving with H.M. Forces.—The following is a further list of names of Members of the Union serving, supplementing that published in October last.

A summary of the previous and present list shows :—

	October list.	January list.
Serving in the Navy	4	5
" France	6	5
" Egypt	3	2
" India	5	3
" British East Africa	2	1
" Gallipoli	1	1
" the British Isles	22	15
Killed in action	5	0
Prisoner in Germany	1	0
	—	—
	49	32
	—	—

Aldworth, T. P. Capt., 3rd Batt. R. West Kent. Attached 2nd Batt. Welsh Regt. (Wounded 9 May, 1915, in France.)

Bannerman, D. A. Owner-Driver, Red Cross motor-ambulance in France.

Betham, R. M. Brigadier-Gen., Commanding Ferozepore Brigade in India.

Blyth, R. O. Gunner, 3/1 East Anglian (Essex) R.G.A.

Brailward, A. C. Col., R.F.A., Commanding the Royal Artillery of the 69th (East Anglian) Division.

Bridgeman, The Hon. R. O. B. Commander, R.N., at sea.

Cameron, J. S. Major, 2nd Batt. R. Sussex Regt. In France, prior to July, 1915, at present on sick leave.

Drummond-Hay, J. A. G. R. Colonel, Commanding the Coldstream Guards and Regimental Distr. in London.

Floyd, J. F. M. Private, 16th Batt. Durham Light Infantry.

Hale, The Rev. J. R. Chaplain to the Forces, 4th Class. 202nd Brigade.

Hardy, E. C. Capt., R.N., Asst. Hydrographer of the Navy.

- Jones, H. K. Fleet-Surgeon, R.N., H.M.S. 'Duke of Edinburgh.'
- Kelsall, H. J. Lt.-Col., R.G.A., Commanding "Q" Siege Brigade at Lydd, Kent.
- Lucas, The Rt. Hon. Lord. Capt., Hampshire Yeomanry, attached to Squadron 14 of the R. Flying Corps, in Egypt.
- Magrath, H. A. F. Lt.-Col., Commanding 54th Sikhs F.F. Samana, India.
- Mathews, G. M. Private, Winchester V.T.C. (Twyford Section).
- Pease, Sir Alfred E., Bt. Officer-in-charge of the Guisborough Remount Depot, Northern Command.
- Pershouse, S. Major, Border Regt.
- Richardson, N. F. Lieut., R.A.M.C. Transport Officer, 1st South Wales Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance.
- Rippon, G. Lt.-Col., Commanding 2nd Line 8th (Irish) Batt. King's Liverpool Regt. in England.
- Rogers, J. M. Lt.-Col., served with 5th Res. Cavalry at York; also in Gallipoli, where wounded in September 1914.
- Sandeman, R. P. Lt.-Col., Commanding 2/1 Royal Gloucestershire Hussars.
- Someren, Dr. G. V. L. van. Capt., East African Medical Service in Br. E. Africa.
- Stanford, C. E. C. Fleet-Surgeon, R.N., at sea.
- Stanford, E. F. Farrier-Sergt., B Batt. Hon. Artillery Company in Egypt.
- Stanford, H. M. Lieut., R.F.A. 33rd Brigade. In France since November 1914. Awarded M.C. July 4, 1915.
- Stanford, J. K. 2nd Lieut., 3rd Batt. Suffolk Regt. In France attached 2nd Batt. and invalided home.
- Stenhouse, J. H. Fleet-Surgeon, R.N., at sea.

- Wall-Row, J. A.B., Royal Naval Air Service, Anti-Aircraft Section.
- Walton, H. J. Lt.-Col., I.M.S., serving with the 25th Cavalry on the N.W. Frontier, India.
- Watt, H. B. Private, 1st (Hampstead) Battalion North London Volunteer Regt.
- Wells, C. H. Serg., 12th (Service) Bat. York & Lanes. Regt.
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Oological Dinner.—A dinner, to which many naturalists specially interested in Oology were invited, was held on Tuesday, Sept. 7th, at Pagani's Restaurant, London. The dinner committee consisted of:—Lord Rothschild, E. Hartert, E. C. Stuart Baker, Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, P. F. Bunyard, and C. Borrer.

Among those present were the following gentlemen:—

Lord Rothschild; E. C. Stuart Baker; Staines Boorman; Clifford Borrer; A. C. H. Borrer; P. F. Bunyard; Dr. H. Coltart; C. W. Colthrup; H. Grönvold; Ernst Hartert; Cyril Hopwood; Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain; Herbert Langton; H. Munt; R. H. Read; W. E. Renaud; J. Wall-Row; Percy Smyth; R. E. Vaughan; G. Witherington; J. J. Baldwin Young.

Lord Rothschild took the chair at 7.30 o'clock.

The CHAIRMAN, in his opening remarks, stated briefly the objects of the present meeting. He said that hitherto the study of oology had scarcely received the attention which it deserved at the hands of scientific naturalists, and that many field-naturalists felt that annual (or possibly more frequent) gatherings like the present one, would give them opportunities of discussing oology, exhibiting rare eggs, and generally stimulate investigation in this branch of science.

Mr. CLIFFORD BORRER proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman for presiding at the dinner, which was unanimously carried. He added that a large number of field-naturalists had expressed their keenest regrets at being

unable to attend the inaugural meeting, and it was obvious that in normal times these gatherings would supply a long-felt want, and he trusted that all those interested in oology, whether members of the B. O. U. or not, would assist in making the movement a success.

Mr. PERCY F. BUNYARD exhibited the following eggs from his collection :—

Rock-Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta petrosus*). Two clutches of 5 eggs each, from Kincardine, showing true erythrism.

Common Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhyncha*). A clutch of 5 from Kent; ground-colour pea-green; markings, heavily capped with rich chocolate-brown, lower portion heavily blotched and spotted with a paler shade.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*). A clutch of 5 showing true erythrism, the normal greenish-blue tinge being quite absent.

Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europæus*). A very remarkable clutch from Kent; ground-colour creamy white; surface-markings consisting of a heavily pigmented large blotch of black-brown on the lower portion of each; the remaining markings consist of underlying conspicuous spots of pale grey. Size of the blotches are 0.40 by 0.33, and 0.55 by 0.50 inch.

Redshank (*Totanus totanus*). A clutch of 4 from Hampshire, with heavily pigmented caps of rich black-brown colour, the lower portions almost without surface-markings.

Also a clutch from Aberdeen of 4 eggs, resembling one type of the Greenshank (*Totanus nebularius*), except that the ground-colour is more ochraceous.

Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). A very beautiful variety-clutch of 3 from Suffolk; ground-colour pale greenish blue; surface-markings very few, of sepia-brown, and underlying markings greyish mauve.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). A clutch of 5 from Hampshire with well-defined olive-green bands round the lower portion of each egg, otherwise quite normal.

Also a clutch from Kent, the lower portions of which are almost without pigment; the division between the pigmented and un-pigmented portions is sharply defined round the whole egg.

Knot (*Tringa canutus*). A clutch of 4 reputed Turnstone's eggs from North Iceland. These eggs are, however, quite unlike the eggs of this species, and are, in the opinion of the exhibitor, undoubtedly those of the Knot. They agree exactly with the description by Dresser ('Birds of Europe,' Eggs, p. 704) both in coloration and measurements as well as in weight, and are very much like two of those figured.

Description: ground-colour creamy white tinged with green. Surface-markings rich brownish black; these vary in size from a pin's head to a pea, and are mostly confined to the tops (apparently one of the characteristics of the Knot). Underlying markings greyish brown tinged with mauve; these are large and conspicuous, and also mostly confined to the broader half. Weight (average 4 eggs) 0.857 gr. They are very distinctive, and do not agree on comparison with any other eggs of the Limicolæ.

The CHAIRMAN exhibited:—

(a) A series of eggs of the Birds of Paradise, comprising a remarkable number of species.

(b) A series of eggs of the finches of the Galapagos Islands. These are extremely rare; the only other known specimens are believed to be those in the California Academy, as those in Nehrkorn's collection came from Tring.

Owing to changes going on in the Galapagos Islands, it is probable that these birds will shortly become extinct.

(c) A pair of perfectly spherical eggs, one of a Bustard from Nyasaland (*Lissotis melanogaster*), and one of a gigantic land-tortoise, for comparison of shape.

Mr. E. C. STUART BAKER exhibited a series of 30 eggs of *Gypaëtus barbatus*, taken (with one exception) in the Himalayas. The series included eggs which the exhibitor believed to be the largest and the smallest yet recorded, viz. 9.46 by

76·0 mm., and 76·5 by 62 mm. The series also contained eggs of remarkably deep coloration.

He also exhibited a series of eggs showing erythristic variation. The first group contained eggs which are so often of a red type that they could almost be considered a normal variation, such as *Sterna bergii*, *Pyctorhis sinensis*, *Dendrocitta*, and *Urocissa*, whilst the second contained eggs of which red varieties are extremely rare, such as *Sarciophorus*, *Corvus splendens*, and *Dumetia*.

Mr. G. WITHERINGTON exhibited a remarkably fine series of eggs of the common Merlin (*Falco aesalon*), together with a few selected clutches of the Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), to demonstrate the complete similarity of certain types in these two species. All these eggs had been personally taken and identified by the exhibitor.

Mr. R. H. READ pointed out that size is a fairly accurate guide for identifying these eggs, and Mr. Bunyard and other gentlemen joined in the discussion, but it is interesting to notice that no one was able to point out which was which of the two species shown.

Mr. CYRIL HOPWOOD made remarks on the Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*) from the Chin Hills, and its eggs, drawing attention to the very small size of this bird's eggs when compared with those of the true Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus peregrinus*).

Dr. HERBERT LANGTON exhibited an interesting series of single eggs of the Lapwing and Redshank, mostly from Kent and Sussex. Some extraordinary varieties were among these. Also a series of Black Guillemots' eggs taken in the British Isles, including some very finely marked specimens.

Mr. R. H. READ exhibited a very large and beautifully constructed nest of the Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*).

Also a series of clutches of white eggs of the following species :—Spotted Flycatcher, Bullfinch, Sedge-Warbler, Garden-Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Reed-Bunting, and Skylark. Mr. Read also showed a number of rare and

interesting nests, including that of a Great Tit, which had been built in the exceptional situation of an open bush. This series also included nests of the following:—Brambling, Mealy Redpoll, Black Redstart, Serin, Icterine Warbler, Rufous Warbler, Orphean Warbler, Wild Canary, Madeiran Golderest, &c.

Mr. BUNYARD stated that white eggs of the Common Skylark were very rare, and that a clutch of two in his own collection were the only specimens he had hitherto met with. He had in his possession, however, a clutch of three almost pure white eggs with slight markings of the Woodlark, taken in Suffolk.

Mr. W. E. RENAUD exhibited some interesting eggs, including fine clutches of the Cirl and Yellow Buntings, and a perfectly even clutch of the Tree-Sparrow showing no odd egg.

Also clutches of Wheatear's and House-Martin's eggs, all clearly spotted with red, exceptionally rare in the latter species. Also a set of 3 eggs of the Kentish Plover of the rare greenish ground type.

The Rev. F. C. R. JOURDAIN exhibited a series of eggs of the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), taken personally on the Lower Danube and in Spain, illustrating the range of variation in the eggs of this species.

Mr. C. W. COLTHRUP exhibited the following eggs:—

(a) Lapwing. Variety-clutch of 4. Three of the eggs had a band of green round the centres, and the fourth a round green blotch on one side about $\cdot 75$ inch in diameter.

(b) Ringed Plover. A clutch of 5 eggs.

Also a variety-clutch, green at the narrow ends.

(c) Nightjar. Pinkish ground-coloured eggs, and a type-clutch for comparison.

(d) Common Partridge. An egg, green at the narrow end. Also 4 elongated and malformed eggs.

(e) Kestrel. A clutch of 6; four eggs normal, one cream-coloured with a few minute brown dots scattered over it, the sixth egg showing a pure white ground-colour at the larger end, the lower portion being blotched with red.

(f) Sparrow-Hawk. A clutch of 6, five of the eggs showing only underlying violet markings, the sixth heavily blotched with red surface-pigment.

Also a single egg of the same species, so heavily marked all over with red, that it might be mistaken for a Kestrel's, but for the blue ground-colour showing through.

Experiments on Homing.—Prof. J. B. Watson and Dr. K. S. Lashley* have recently made some important experiments at Bird Key, in the Tortugas, on the homing capacity of the Noddy Tern (*Anous stolidus*) and the Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuliginosa*), which breed there in large numbers. The island is peculiarly suitable for the purpose, since it marks the northern limit of the migration of these two tropical Terns (so that if the birds are experimentally transported further north, they find themselves in regions which they have not previously visited); moreover, on the westward side there is only the open water of the Gulf of Mexico until the shore-line of Texas is reached, Galveston being 855 statute miles distant. "This strip of open water proves a magnificent route for homing experiments." The authors caught Terns at their nesting-places, put individual marks of paint on their head and neck, tied a small tag recording the date, locality, and marking round the neck, fixed a larger duplicate tag beside the nest, transported the birds in large cages to a distance, liberated them, and watched for their return. The general result is of great interest:—"The Noddy and Sooty Terns can return from distances up to 1000 miles in the absence of all landmarks, at least so far as the term landmark is understood at present."

* Papers from the Department of Marine Biology of the Carnegie Institution at Washington. Vol. vii., "Homing and Related Activities of Birds." By J. B. Watson and K. S. Lashley. Pp. 1-104+7 plates+9 figs. (Washington: The Carnegie Institution, 1915.)

Some details of this careful piece of work may be noted, for they are very instructive. From Galveston (855 miles away) three birds returned out of ten, taking from about six to about twelve days; two Noddies liberated at 720 miles both returned, taking between eleven and seventeen days; out of ten birds liberated at 585 miles eight returned, taking from about four to about eight days; out of four Noddies and four Sooties liberated in open water 461 statute miles away, two Noddies returned in three days; of twelve taken north to Mobile, only one returned, taking about seven days; two Noddies and two Sooties carried in a state-room to Havana and released in the harbour there early in the morning of July 11, returned to Bird Key on the 12th, the distance in a straight line being about 108 statute miles; of three Noddies and two Sooties liberated off Cape Hatteras (850 miles to the north), both of the latter and at least one of the former species returned after several days. "The alongshore route, which is the one in all probability chosen by the birds on their return, since they were gone several nights, is approximately 1081 statute miles." (It seems that the birds almost never rest on the water, unless they happen to find pieces of driftwood or the like.) The records show that the Terns often take as long for short distances as for long distances, and that a return from the open sea outside of all landmarks is just as practicable as a return from a coast.

Notice to B.O.U. Members.—Members are reminded that the Annual Subscription to the Union, due on January 1st, is now *One Pound Five Shillings*, and the Secretary will be glad to receive same as early as possible.

A form of proposal for candidates for membership of the Union will in future be inserted in every issue of the 'Ibis.' If a member has anyone to propose for election at the Annual General Meeting, which will be held on March 12, 1916, the form should be duly filled up and returned to the Secretary, B.O.U., c/o Zoological Society, Regent's Park, N.W., before the 31st of January.